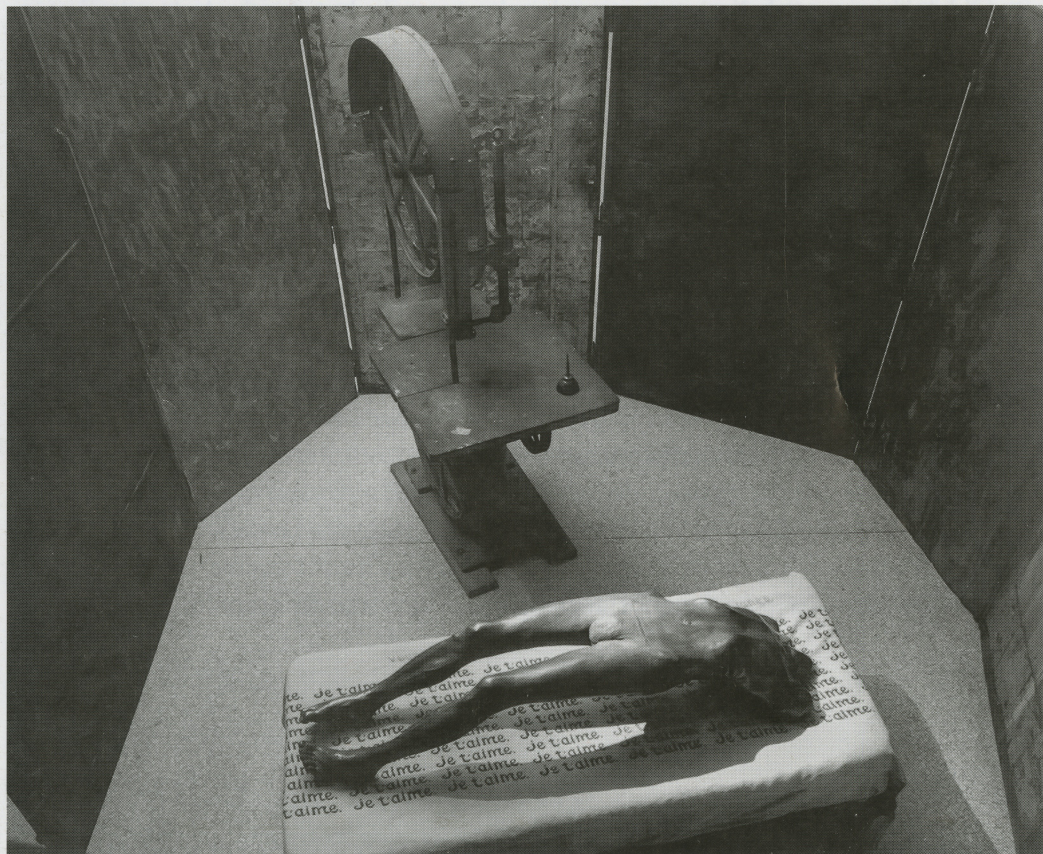


LOUISE BOURGEOIS

Memory and Desire

04.10.25 – 11.16.25

CAAC CENTRO ANDALUZ
DE ARTE
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Memory and Desire

Our lives cannot be understood without architecture. We carry out a large part of our activities within it. Inside it, our essential social relationships unfold, especially the intimate ones. When we say, for example, "at home on Sundays we used to..." we're referring to what we used to do as a family on that day of the week.

The childhood of artist **Louise Bourgeois** (Paris, 1911 – New York, 2010) was not easy, and this stage of life is what largely shapes our personality. Her governess, who lived with them, was also her father's lover. A relationship her mother endured as best she could, taking on a role that was secondary in one sense but also central in another, as she tried to heal the wounds that inevitably opened. One of the meanings of the sculptor's famous spider-shaped works is precisely that: the mother who, through weaving, protects and heals (the family business was tapestry restoration). Because it was a home and a family under tension, architecture in Bourgeois's work often becomes a metaphor for oppression, confinement, and submission. This is the case in her *Femme Maison* paintings from the 1940s, in which the female body appears as a hybrid with a house; and the fact is that, until very recently, women were closely identified with the home—not only with domestic chores such as cleaning, cooking, ironing, etc., but also with child-rearing and pleasing their husbands. "Housewives." Two decades later, she created sculptures that evoke animal dens or burrows, perhaps to more deeply express the psychological reduction of women to wombs—their capacity to give life and protection.

But it is undoubtedly in her installations (rooms, passages or cells, like this one) where this allegorical sense of architecture becomes most tangible. So, we present in this space (a former monastery) this cell, which is so different from the mas-

culine cells of the old Carthusian monks... It is a structure made from pre-existing materials—industrial doors from warehouses in New York, the city where Bourgeois found peace and built a very different life with her husband from the one she had known as a child. His name was Robert Goldwater (1907–1973), an art historian specializing in African art.

Although, as mentioned, this setup creates an oppressive space due to its small size—evoking even, due to the presence of an industrial saw, a dungeon or torture chamber—there are elements that may convey opposite sensations. The cell tends toward a certain verticality, which in Bourgeois's work refers to that aforementioned calm, the acceptance of the past, and the liberation of having left it behind. The same applies to the reverse side—kept hidden—of the rough sheet: a light blue satin lining, a color that can be associated with certain skies in the city of skyscrapers (vertical structures par excellence), the landscape the artist enjoyed. These, let's say, positive messages are reinforced by the repeated phrase, like a mantra or school "punishment," embroidered with needle and thread (a form of repair) in her native language: *je t'aime* ("I love you").

But who does Louise love? We can only say it's a man, as the body is clearly male, despite being "hysterical" (and hysteria, etymologically, comes from the womb). A decapitated male... the father figure? Someone she simply doesn't wish to reveal? In any case, it is most likely that Bourgeois sculpted her deepest psyche—the psyche of a liberated girl under New York's blue sky—revealing to us her own libido.

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